
NEWS From:

Congressman Mike Honda

FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA



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Honda Introduces Bill to Improve Airport Security through Technology

Washington D.C.—U.S. Congressman Mike Honda (D-San Jose) late yesterday evening introduced legislation that could dramatically improve airport security through the use of existing cutting edge technology, such as fingerprint authentication, face, hand and voice recognition and retinal scanning. Honda, a member of the House Transportation Committee's Aviation Subcommittee, recently convened a closed-door meeting with top Silicon Valley executives, the FAA, FBI, and Bay Area Airport officials to discuss tech-driven solutions to emerging national aviation security needs.

"The attacks of September 11th demand that the Congress act decisively to cut through red tape and foster a direct dialogue between high tech companies and government agencies," said Honda. **"By creating a framework where the most effective new technologies can be evaluated and implemented more efficiently we can create a more reliable and seamless security system for our nation's airports in a much shorter timeframe."**

"I commend Congressman Honda for his leadership in promoting the use of biometrics technology in aviation security," said Bob McCashin, Chairman and CEO of Identix Inc. of Los Gatos, California. **"This innovative set of proposals seeks to leverage existing, proven technologies and creates a framework for the FAA to deploy these technologies in an effective manner. Moreover, this legislation supports enhanced airport and airline security, and will help restore travelers' confidence to get America flying again. As the leader in biometrics technology, Identix strongly supports the 'Aviation Security Technology Enhancement Act' and urges Congress to take swift action to pass it."**

The legislation introduced today by Honda and Representative Jim Matheson (D-Utah) proposes the development of standards and measurements for biometric and other technologies at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Biometric technology, which is used to identify and authenticate an individual's identity based on unique physiological data such as fingerprints and retinas, remains one of the most promising new ways to improve security at airports. A variety of biometric systems already exist, however, standards are needed to ensure their widespread use. The bill also calls for NIST and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to perform field tests to determine how well such technology would work in airport and airline security.

"Our ultimate goal in Congress should be to reshape our national aviation security infrastructure in a manner that allows us to safely and efficiently move people and goods across the country," continued Honda. **"I am confident that by harnessing the innovative power of Silicon Valley we can cut down on travel delays and other burdens on commerce while improving security at our airports— our legislation is a positive step in this direction."**

The bill also sets up a pilot program to be performed by the FAA in at least 20 national airports to test and evaluate security technology for providing access control for airline and airport employees to closed areas; establishing passenger identification for check-in and baggage control and establishing technology for identifying suspected terrorists. After one year, the FAA would submit to Congress a report based on the results of pilot program on the feasibility, cost, benefits and effectiveness of these security technologies.